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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004245

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SA/FO, AMBASSADOR TAYLOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/17/2013

TAGS: PREL FAID AF IT AFGHANISTAN

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: ITALIAN MFA SHARES FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR DUBAI, TO ASSIST IN "VOTER REGISTRATION"

REF: A. STATE 237880

1B. ROME 3827

1C. USEU BRUSSELS 4375

1D. STATE 258067

1E. ROME 4155

1F. 9/5/03 LERNER-ROCHMAN-THIEDE ET AL E-MAIL

CLASSIFIED BY: POL MINCOUNS THOMAS COUNTRYMAN, REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D).

11. (SBU) WE RECEIVED ON SEPTEMBER 17 A FAX FROM AMBASSADOR ENRICO DE MAIO, ITALIAN MFA SPECIAL ENVOY FOR AFGHANISTAN, ADDRESSED TO AMBASSADOR TAYLOR. (FULL TEXT OF LETTER IS AT PARA 5.) IN THE LETTER, DE MAIO CONFIRMS, IN ITALY'S ROLE AS HOLDER OF THE EU PRESIDENCY, THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND EU MEMBERS PLEDGED ALMOST 20 MILLION DOLLARS IN RESPONSE TO THE U.S. REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FOR VOTER REGISTRATION (REF A). THE LETTER ASSURES US AS WELL THAT ITALY WILL CONTINUE ADVOCATING "A FAIR SHARE OF EU FUNDING" FOR ELECTION-RELATED COSTS IN AFGHANISTAN.

12. (SBU) WHEN DE MAIO TELEPHONED TO ANNOUNCE THE ASSISTANCE, POLOFF EXPRESSED USG GRATITUDE FOR THE FUNDING BUT ALSO NOTED THAT, PER REF F, FUNDS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION MAY HAVE BEEN FOUND. DE MAIO SAID HE HAD UNDERSTOOD THE SAME, BUT POINTED OUT THERE WOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH DEMAND FOR THE FUNDING, EVEN IF THE IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY HAD BEEN OVERCOME. HE ALSO NOTED WRYLY THAT WE HAD REQUESTED THE ASSISTANCE IN WRITING, AND ITALY WAS THEREFORE DUTY-BOUND TO REPLY. DE MAIO REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT ON THE URGENCY FOR AMPLE FUNDING FOR AFGHANISTAN ACROSS THE BOARD AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING THE INTERNATIONAL FOCUS ON REFORM, ELECTIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRY (REF B).

13. (SBU) DE MAIO CLARIFIED THAT THESE FUNDS DID NOT COME OUT OF PREVIOUS PLEDGES, BUT REPRESENT NEW MONIES. THE EU WILL ANNOUNCE THIS PLEDGE AT DUBAI, HE EXPLAINED, AND SOME ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES WHICH WERE UNABLE TO PLEDGE AT THE SEPTEMBER 8 MEETING MIGHT BE ABLE EITHER TO SIGN ON IN ADVANCE OF DUBAI, INCREASING THE AMOUNT, OR BRING ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO THE DUBAI SESSION. ITALY STILL PLANS TO ANNOUNCE AN INDIVIDUAL PLEDGE IN DUBAI, AS WELL -- BUT DE MAIO HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE AMOUNT (SEE REF E).

14. (C) COMMENT: IT IS UNCLEAR IF THE ASSISTANCE IN DE MAIO'S LETTER COULD BE THAT FORETOLD BY EC COMMISSION ASIA DIRECTOR FOTIADES (REF C). DE MAIO'S LETTER SPECIFICALLY TIES THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO OUR REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO ASSIST WITH VOTER REGISTRATION, WHILE FOTIADES SAID EU MEMBER STATES HAD RESPONDED TO A CALL FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR SECURITY INITIATIVES IN AFGHANISTAN. (DE MAIO'S LETTER ALSO REFERS TO THE NEED FOR POLICE SALARIES, BUT IN THE ELECTION CONTEXT.) IN ANY EVENT, MORE MONEY IS GOOD -- AND WE HOPE THE DETAILS OF WHERE IT EVENTUALLY GOES CAN BE WORKED OUT.

15. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT, LETTER FROM AMBASSADOR DE MAIO TO AMBASSADOR WILLIAM B. TAYLOR:

DEAR AMBASSADOR TAYLOR,

FIRSTLY, I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOU FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT AS COORDINATOR FOR AFGHANISTAN.

WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR REQUEST TO ITALY, ALSO AS HOLDER OF THE EU PRESIDENCY, TO MEET THE IMMEDIATE NEED FOR 10 MILLION DOLLARS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION, I AM GLAD TO INFORM YOU THAT WE REACHED THE GOAL AT A MEETING IN BRUXELLES ON SEPTEMBER THE 8TH OF THE EXPERTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION. IN FACT WE OVERCAME THE TARGET AS THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE EU MEMBERS PLEDGED ALMOST 20 MILLION DOLLARS. OF COURSE WE ARE AWARE OF THE TOTAL COST OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS (75.6 MILLION US\$ PLUS 11 US\$ (SIC) FOR THE POLICE) AND WE SHALL CONTINUE ADVOCATING A FAIR SHARE OF EU FUNDING.

WITH MY BEST REGARDS,  
(SIGNED) ENRICO DE MAIO

END TEXT.  
SEMBLER

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2003ROME04245 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL